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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 22 August 2001 from the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to draw your attention, as a matter of urgency, to the present alarming situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

The Committee has been extremely worried by the latest dramatic escalation of tensions and violence in and around East Jerusalem and in areas under full Palestinian control. Judging by its present policies and actions on the ground, it appears that Israel has no intention of respecting agreements signed with the Palestinian side and has firmly decided on continuing wide-scale military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in areas under full control of the Palestinian Authority. The latest and most striking incidents included the taking over of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis, and the massive Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) incursion into Jenin. Furthermore, Israel continues to use sophisticated weapons, including helicopter gunships, in the extrajudicial killings of suspected Palestinian activists. As a result of the violence, the death toll is mounting, the Palestinian economy is decimated and the infrastructure of the Occupied Palestinian Territory gets further eroded.

The Mitchell Committee report, with its sensible and even-handed recommendations, offered a practicable way out of the impasse. Both sides have accepted them. However, the position taken by Israel that all violence should cease before the cooling-off period starts and negotiations resume has brought us to the current critical situation. The recent violations by Israel of international law and of its agreements with the Palestinian side prove time and again that the Israeli Government has not been able to embrace fully and unequivocally the fundamental principle of land for peace and apply in practice the commitments and obligations it entered into at Madrid and Oslo.

As the crisis persists, and due to the lack of mutual trust, it is abundantly clear that the two sides are unable to achieve a breakthrough. They need a more involved

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assistance of key international actors, including the United Nations. It is the opinion of our Committee that, at this critical juncture, more than ever, the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international legitimacy and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

Resolute steps should be taken now with a view to implementing the Mitchell Committee recommendations in their entirety and without further delay. A realistic plan for such implementation should be agreed upon within a reasonable time span and with workable ways for its monitoring. Negotiations on security, as well as on interim and permanent status issues, should be restarted as a matter of urgency. The Committee is of the view that a permanent status agreement, long overdue, should be finally reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles of the Madrid Peace Conference.

Since its inception in 1975, our Committee has maintained that the core of the problem has been the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory. Once again, we call upon the Government of Israel to abide by the principles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The Committee has repeatedly put forward its position with respect to the situation on the ground and the threat to international peace and security posed by the stalemate in the peace negotiations, the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the deplorable state of the Palestinian economy. United Nations bodies, especially the Security Council and the General Assembly, making full use of your peacemaking efforts, should stand up to the challenges before them and take concrete steps aimed at addressing the continuing Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bruno Rodríguez **Parrilla**
Acting Chairman
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People